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Sermon Notes

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## **Christ “Much More” Than Adam**

### **Romans 5:15-17**

#### I. A Black Cloth, A Glittering Diamond

#### II. Paul’s Purpose: “To the praise of His glorious grace!!”

##### A. “Let Him who boasts boast in the Lord”

Charles Spurgeon: “The sin which destroyed us was the transgression of a finite being, and cannot be compared in power with the grace of the infinite God; it was the sin of a moment, and therefore cannot be compared for force and energy with the everlasting purpose of divine love. If, then, the comparatively feeble fount of Adam’s sin sends forth a flood which drowns the world in sorrow and death, what must be the boundless blessing poured forth from the infinite source of divine grace? The grace of God is like his nature, omnipotent and unlimited. God has not a measure of love, but he is love; love to the uttermost dwells in him. God is not only gracious to this degree or to that, but he is gracious beyond measure; we read of “the exceeding riches of his grace.” He is “the God of all grace,” and his mercy is great above the heavens.

##### B. Context in Romans

##### C. Purpose here: Answering some root questions...

Why bring in this complex argument about Adam & Christ, original sin, etc.?

1. How did we come to this depravity?
2. How did we come out of this depravity?
3. How are we secure in Christ?
4. How much glory should God receive for this incredible gift?

#### III. Adam and Christ: Our Federal Heads Compared and Contrasted

##### A. “Federal headship”

1. “Federal” = covenant

2. "Head" = representative
3. Concept: one man stood in our place, representing all who stood united with him
  - a. Adam represented us at the tree of knowledge
  - b. Christ represented us at the tree of Calvary

#### B. Adam and Christ Compared

1. Adam is a "type" of Christ

**vs. 14** *"Adam...is a type of Him who was to come."*

"Type" = "the impression made by striking something"; a form, pattern, example

Illus. Williamsburg printer's shop; type set in wooden frame for use in printing press

2. "One" and "Many"

**vs. 15** *"If by the transgression of the one, the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ overflow to the many."*

3. "Just as" and "So also"

**vs. 18** *Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men.*

4. BOTH "one/many" and "just as/so also"

**vs. 19** *For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.*

Key idea: because Adam represented a large group of people when he stood before the tree of testing in Eden, he is a type of Christ... who also represented a large group of people when He died on the cross

Adam is our representative (covenant head) in Eden

Christ is our representative (covenant head) at Calvary

BUT Paul cannot simply leave it at that... because Adam and Christ are also VERY DIFFERENT from each other!!

### C. Adam and Christ Contrasted

#### 1. Paul's two-fold purpose in vss. 15-17

- a. flow of thought interrupted... "BUT" vs. 15
- b. comparison done; focus on contrast
- c. two-fold purpose:

- Christ is NOT LIKE Adam
- Christ is GREATER THAN Adam

#### 2. Christ is NOT LIKE Adam

**vs. 15** *"But the free gift is NOT LIKE the transgression."*

**vs. 16** *"And the gift is NOT LIKE that which came through the one who sinned."*

Then Paul connect two "For" statements... vs. 16 & 17 explain how the free gift is NOT LIKE what came to use through Adam

#### 3. Christ is GREATER THAN Adam

Paul makes this clear by his repeated use of "MUCH MORE"

**vs. 15** *But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many!*

**vs. 17** *For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.*

Piper exposes wrong idea: Adam's sin put us in the whole a "minus 10"... Christ's act of righteousness balances that out so that we're back to the starting place

NO NO NO NO!!!

The effects of Christ's actions are superabundantly beyond the effects of Adam's actions

Adam gets us a minus 10, Christ a positive infinity! HOW MUCH MORE ABUNDANT is grace than sin!!

**vs. 20** *“Where sin abounds, grace abounds all the more.”*

#### IV. Unfolding the Contrast: Christ MUCH MORE Than Adam

- Free gift MUCH GREATER THAN judgment
- Grace to many MUCH GREATER THAN death to many
- Many transgressions MUCH GREATER THAN one transgression
- Christ's Result MUCH GREATER THAN Adam's Result
- Reign of grace receivers MUCH GREATER THAN Reign of death

##### A. Free gift GREATER THAN judgment

1. Greek word = "Charisma"... all gifts are free; this one stresses the surprising nature gift
2. Gift language superabounds

**vs. 15** ***"But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if, by the transgression of the one the many died, how much more did the grace of God and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many."***

- a. Greek difficult... Paul is stressing the GIFT GIFT GIFT... free, not deserved
- b. grace came from God AND from Christ
3. Gift GREATER THAN the transgression
  - a. "transgression" is Adam's sin... means to venture into God-forbidden territory
  - b. "free gift" is all that God gave us in Christ... His incarnation all the way to His atoning death... the whole purpose was to save us
  - c. a free gift is CONTRARY to what we deserve

***"to the praise of His glorious grace!!!"***

##### B. Grace to many GREATER THAN death to many (vs. 15)

1. Result: Adam's transgression resulted in death
2. God's grace and the gift of grace through Christ OVERFLOWED to the many
3. Note: "overflow" [we get the same word again in vs. 17]

**vs. 17** ***"God's abundant provision of grace..."***

Gives a sense of a mighty river of grace, washing away all your sins... an supereffusion of grace...

Illus. Amazon River, 4.2 million cu feet of water per second!!

John MacArthur: "Adam's sinful act, devastating as it was, had but a one-dimensional effect—it brought death to everyone. But the effect of Christ's redemptive act has facets beyond measure, because He not only restores man to spiritual life but gives him the very life of God. Death is by nature static and empty, whereas life by nature is active and full. Only life can **abound**."

John Calvin: "Christ is much more powerful to save than Adam was to destroy."

C. Christ's Results GREATER THAN Adam's Results

*vs. 16 Again, the gift of God is not like the result of the one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification.*

Spurgeon: We came into the world with a bias towards evil. Those of us who have any knowledge of our own nature must confess that there is in us a strong tendency towards sin, which is mixed up with our very being. This is not derived solely from faults of education, or from the imitation of others; but there is a bent within us in the wrong direction, and this has been there from our birth. Alas! that it should be so; but so it is. In addition to having this tendency to sin, we are made liable to death — nay, not liable alone, but we are sure in due time to bow our heads beneath the fatal stroke. Two only of the human race have escaped death, but the rest have left their bodies here to moulder back into mother earth, and unless the Lord comes speedily, we expect that the same thing will happen to these bodies of ours. While we live we know that the sweat of our brow must pay the price of our bread; we know that our children must be born with pangs and travail; we know that we ourselves must return to the dust from whence we are taken; for dust we are, and unto dust must we return. O Adam, you did a sad day's work for us when you listened to the voice of your wife and ate of the forbidden tree. The world has no more a Paradise anywhere, but everywhere it has the place of wailing and the field of the dead. Where can you go and not find traces of the first transgression in the sepulcher and its mouldering bones? Every field is fattened with the dust of the departed: every wave of the sea is tainted with atoms of the dead.

4. Christ's effect is GREATER!!!

5. Many trespasses (a whole history of human sinfulness) resulted in a gift

What?? Trespasses resulting in a gift from God??!! What incredible grace... justice naturally follows transgression; the law crushes the transgressor! Only grace can make a gift follow a river of sin like it did

O, Christian!! Marvel at the free grace of God! Why would a gift follow many transgression?

6. Free gift is BASIS of justification

- a. justification is God's declaration of "NOT GUILTY"
- b. justification does not hang in space without a basis
- c. the GIFT results in JUSTIFICATION
- d. what gift? See vs. 17

**vs. 17 "...those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness..."**

Spurgeon on the GIFT of Christ's righteousness: Adam commits one fault and spoils us; but Christ's works and achievements are not one, but many as the stars of heaven. Look at that life of obedience: it is like a crown set with all manner of priceless jewels: all the virtues are in it, and it is without flaw in any point. If one sinful action of our first covenant head destroys, shall not a whole life of holiness, on the part of our second covenant representative be accepted for us?

AND ON THAT BASIS I DECLARE YOU NOT GUILTY OF ALL YOUR SINS!!!

A gift of righteousness NOT YOURS, just like Adam's sin was NOT YOURS!!!

BUT the gift of Christ's righteousness is MUCH MORE than the imputing of Adam's sin ever was!

D. Many transgressions GREATER THAN one transgression (vs. 16)

**vs. 16 *Again, the gift of God is not like the result of the one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification.***

1. ONE SIN... Adam simply committed one sin
2. Holiness of God!!! God's incredible hatred of even one sin!!

All this death, suffering, grief, pain, torment and judgment came as the result of ONE SIN!! What kind of God is this? And what of the awesome and terrifying holiness of God??

3. YET many transgressions were cleansed by the blood of Christ

Illus. If you were in the space shuttle in outer space, orbiting this blue planet of ours, only a handful of man-made structures would be visible to your eye. The Great Wall of China would be one of those. Another would be the Fresh Kills Sanitary Landfill in Staten Island, New York!! Every day, 12,000 metric tons of New York City garbage is dumped there, making a monstrously huge mountain of filth so large it can be seen from outer space. Recently, two sanitation workers became dizzy and were overcome by noxious fumes that emanated from a section of this dump.

With that picture in your mind, let me read two scriptures:

***Matthew 12:36 “I tell you that men will have to give an account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken.”***

***Revelation 7:9-10 After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. <sup>10</sup> And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."***

A mountain of sins forgiven!! Lies Lust Arguments Selfishness Anger Pride

This is what Jesus Christ had to cover with His blood! One sin was enough to condemn Adam, but this monstrous mountain of vile wickedness... all our sins... were spiritually laid on Christ and He atoned for it all

O, the incomprehensible grace of God! O, the infinite value of the blood of Jesus Christ

E. Reign of grace receivers GREATER THAN Reign of death

***vs. 17 For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.***

1. Unexpected break of parallel

a. expect Paul to compare reign of death to reign of life

b. if so, it would have read

“For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will life reign through the one man Jesus Christ.”

2. TRUE: Life reigns!!! Grace reigns!!! But here, Paul says something even more astounding:

YOU, O CHRISTIAN, WILL REIGN!!!

***“...how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ***

Christians reign in life through Christ!

We reign now... we will reign more later!

Now: We reign over sin, over temptation, over trials, over spiritual forces of evil

Later: We will reign over death, we will reign with Christ forever and ever:

***Revelation 3:21 To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne.***

Paul's point: the reign of grace receivers is GREATER than the reign of death ever was

- It is an eternal reign... death was temporary
- It is an unbreakable reign... death was defeated
- It is an abundantly fruitful reign... death was totally barren

The reign of Christians in life is FAR GREATER than the tyrannical reign of death

3. Conditional promise: not true of every human

BUT THIS IS A **CONDITIONAL** promise

***“...how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ***

- a. Paul is stressing that not every human being receives this gift of life
- b. every human being is condemned in Adam
- c. BUT only those who receive the gift of grace will reign in life!!

## V. Application: Assurance

Non-Christian: Will you receive this today? There is no other answer to the reign of death!!

Christian: Assurance

Charles Spurgeon: "Honey from a Lion" This assurance becomes stronger still when we think that it seems more inevitable that men should be saved by the death of Christ than that men should be lost by the sin of Adam. It might seem possible that, after Adam had sinned, God might have said, "Notwithstanding this covenant of works, I will not lay this burden upon the children of Adam"; but it is not possible that after the eternal Son of God has become man, and has bowed his head to death, God should say, "Yet after all I will not save men for Christ's sake." Stand and look at the Christ upon the cross, and mark those wounds of his, and you will become absolutely certain that sin can be pardoned, nay, must be pardoned to those who are in Christ Jesus.

Honey from all the lions attacking us because of Adam:

- Mothers: in great pain you bring forth children into the world; in great pain your struggle with their sin natures as you train them...all of this because of the sin of one man, Adam: HOW MUCH MORE CERTAIN will you rejoice in the salvation of the one man, Jesus Christ??!!
- Farmers: you see the fields produce thorns and thistles for you, because the ground has been cursed for Adam's sake; yet the promise of the gospel is that some day you will reign with Christ over a new earth which will not suffer the same curse!! If you groan at the cursing of the present earth, HOW MUCH MORE CERTAIN will you rejoice in the salvation of the one man, Jesus Christ??!!
- Workers: do you wipe the sweat off your brow from the labor of your day? Do you chafe under the yoke of a job that grieves you and day after day you must report for duty to support yourself and your loved ones? All this grief you received from your first father, Adam. HOW MUCH MORE CERTAIN will you rejoice in the salvation of the one man, Jesus Christ??!!
- Mourners: when you see a funeral passing slowly in the streets, with the headlights on and the mourners wearing black; when you hear the bell toll in the church and realize that someday it will toll for your parents, your spouse, your children, yes, even someday it will toll for you! When you realize that all this death has entered the world through the sin of one man, Adam, HOW MUCH MORE CERTAIN will you rejoice in the salvation of the one man, Jesus Christ??!!

What is this logic? God the Father has a MUCH HIGHER REGARD for what Christ did than what Adam did... so turn every grief in the sin-cursed world into MUCH MORE ASSURANCE that the final Adam, Christ will save you completely and forever.

In the closing months of 1999, a blue ribbon panel assembled by Time Magazine got together to determine their “Person of the Century.” The rules for this game were clearly agreed upon: they were looking for the person who had had the greatest impact on the century, for better or worse.

By those rules, some of the panel brought up the question of Adolph Hitler. Of course, they all recoiled from the idea of putting Hitler’s face on the cover of their magazine with the title: “Man of the Century,” [that would be terrible for marketing and sales!] But they still felt duty bound to investigate the possibility from a purely academic point of view. Had Adolph Hitler, the man who had unleashed forces which lead to a massive upheaval and a total transformation of the world as we know it... had this evil man had the greatest impact of any human being on the 20<sup>th</sup> century?

U.N. Ambassador Richard Holbrooke reluctantly nominated Hitler, saying that the essence of Hitlerism is still with us today: “racism, ethnic hatred, extreme nationalism, state organized murder is still alive, still causing millions of deaths.” Holbrooke said, “Freedom is the century’s most powerful idea, but the struggle is far from over.”

Time then went deeper to analyze the issues of good and evil themselves.:

You could ask this of any year, any century: Which has the greater impact, good or evil, the heroes or the villains, Roosevelt and Churchill or Hitler and Stalin? To what extent do they depend on each other, when threats produce resolve, when terror engenders courage, when an ultimate challenge to principle has the effect of making principles stronger, forging them by fire? Thoughtful people who argue for Hitler as the Person of the Century do not want to honor him; they want to autopsy him, understand what made him strong and what finally killed him, and search, perhaps, for a vaccine for the virus that reappears still in ethnic enclaves, on websites, in the wilderness camps of skinhead anarchists and in the halls of Columbine High School, where two boys celebrated Hitler's birthday with a memorial massacre of children.

These are the very issues that Romans 5 seeks to answer: not only the origins of evil, but also how it has spread to every person on the face of the earth. In a very real sense, the Apostle Paul would say that, if you’re looking for the person most responsible for the evil of every century, you need look no farther than one man: Adam.

But in Romans 5:15-17, Paul goes deeper into the incredible good news of the gospel... the ultimate hero of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is the good hero... that the effect of the good hero FAR OUTWEIGHS the effect of the evil villain. But the good hero of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was not Roosevelt or Churchill or Albert Einstein, for that matter. The hero of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is the same as the hero of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and of every century... Jesus Christ. And the point of Romans 5:15-17 is that Christ’s powerful effect is MUCH GREATER than anything that we received in Adam, no matter how horrible it was.

- Amsterdam diamond story